



CITY OF ELY COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

28TH APRIL 2014

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COUNCILLORS

WEST WARD

Vacancy

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Vacancy

Vacancy

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Alison Arnold 51 Fleetwood, Ely CB6 1BH Tel: 667640

Chairman of the Council and Mayor of the City of Ely is Councillor Elaine Griffin-Singh

Deputy Chairman of the Council and Deputy Mayor of the City of Ely is Councillor Elisabeth Every

FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT 2013-14

The members of this Committee consist of: the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Chairs of all other committees.

The Committee is responsible for the Council finances, legal matters, the Local Needs Housing Scheme, communications, staff recruitment and welfare.

The Council's expenditure for 2013-14 has fallen within its total income this term thanks to the close monitoring and careful handling of financial matters by the Clerk. We have adopted a balanced budget for 2014-15, whilst maintaining a minimal rise in the City of Ely Council's element of Council Tax of 2.7%, despite increased responsibilities and aspirations.

As in previous years, the Council has been pleased to support local groups and charities via its annual Grant Scheme. Whilst the Council is not able to support all those that apply, and cannot always award the sums requested, a total of 24 bodies have received grants this year totalling £11,560.

The Council was very pleased to purchase the old Magistrates Court building during the year for the sum of £1. A planning application has been submitted and upon approval, a programme of renovation will begin. The City of Ely Council will be relocating its offices to this site in the coming months. The listed Court Room will host a regime of educational and tourism led activity in partnership with Ely Museum, and the building will also offer space which will see a range of commercial and community activities taking place to financially support the building in the long term.

Successful negotiations have also resulted in the Council signing an Agreement which will see The Maltings, in entirety, being leased to the City of Ely Council from mid-September 2014. The terms of the Agreement consist of a peppercorn rent and a 99 year lease for The Maltings building in return for the Council accepting future responsibility for Ely Museum and ADEC. The vision is for The Maltings building to offer more arts and community-based activity and the overall project will encompass the Maltings Cottage to deliver an outstanding provision enhancing the tourism offer around the riverside area.

The Finance & Personnel Committee now considers the priority for Section 106 projects and takes responsibility for allocating Council funds to support the aspirations and now varied assets of the Council from reserves, precept or revenue. The creation of a Community Infrastructure Levy by central Government will see revenue streams increasingly coming to the City of Ely Council in the coming year and their allocation will also be handled by this Committee.

The Council has an exciting year ahead as the implementation of the various asset projects take shape and begin operation. I am confident that future Chairmen will strive to ensure that the delivery of services and amenities are carried out in the best interests of the Council and local community.

I wish to offer my sincere thanks for the support of Council members and staff; the Clerk, Tracey Coulson; Assistant Clerk, Sarah Jay and Administrative Assistant, Marianne Pickering during my term in office on behalf of myself and the community.

Cllr Elaine Griffin-Singh
Chairman of the Council

PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT 2013-14

The City of Ely Council members sit on one of two Planning Committees which meet every two weeks. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor attend all of the meetings and the Committee is Chaired by the Mayor.

The Committees can only make recommendations, as it is East Cambs District Council Planning Department or Planning Committee that determines the outcomes of planning applications.

The number of plans reviewed has steadily increased over the year as the economy shows signs of recovery. The general view is to approve applications to support the economy and growth in the area as long as plans do not contravene policies around city centre signage, negatively affect street scenes or create access problems on busy roads etc.

There are a number of major developments in the pipeline, including the North Ward development, Station Gateway, and out of town retail and leisure sites. The Committees have monitored these schemes as they develop, often joining together and requesting presentations from developers or Planning Officers to allow for questioning, comprehensive discussion and input. The City of Ely Council increasingly sends representatives to speak at the East Cambs District Council's Planning meetings to state the views of the Council.

REPRESENTATIONS ON OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The City of Ely Council has representatives on various organisations within the City of Ely. These organisations include Prickwillow Village Council, Needham's Foundation, Paradise Sports Centre, City of Ely Allotments Association, Trinity Dole Charity, Ely Museum, High & New Barns Steering Group, Stuntney Village Council and Cambridgeshire Town Centres Working Party.

Cllr Elaine Griffin-Singh
Chairman of the Council

RECREATION AND CEMETERY COMMITTEE 2013-2014

Recreation

The ongoing upgrade and replacement of play equipment continued with the emphasis on providing equipment, which is stimulating and enjoyable to its users. The nine play areas the City of Ely Council is responsible for continue in most parts to be well used and this requirement is likely to increase in the future, as more homes are built and more young families come to live in Ely.

The replacement equipment is now predominantly metal because it has a longer life than the timber equipment, however timber is still used where it is considered more appropriate for the particular site.

Our team of grounds staff carry out daily checks of the sites for cleanliness and safety and carry out maintenance to existing equipment on a planned basis.

This year we have replaced equipment in the following areas together with the necessary safety flooring required

Stuntney	-	Climbing / exercise frame
Ely (St Johns Road)	-	Climbing and spinning equipment

We have also started to replace the old timber surround fencing to play areas with galvanised steel fencing, which will be much longer lasting and should not require any maintenance.

Cemetery

A roadway has been installed to Section Con E, which has enabled better access for mourners and funeral vehicles. This has proved successful and was very beneficial during the last wet winter.

The grounds team continues to maintain the area to a good standard and continue to carry out the ongoing task of testing and repairing memorials

As last year, we are once again employing two seasonal workers from April to October. This has proven to be successful and the intention will be to carry this on in future years.

General

The current ground staffing levels seem adequate for the existing areas of responsibility and are supported by the office staffs, who deal with the line management and many administration tasks associated with the recreation and cemetery areas.

It is hoped the standards achieved can be maintained in subsequent years and the rolling programme of updating of equipment, will continue as funds permit.

Cllr N Clarke

Chair of Recreation & Cemetery Committee

STREET FURNITURE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2013 -14

As part of its responsibilities, the Committee maintains existing items of street furniture in ownership of the City of Ely Council, such as bus shelters, street lights and dog bins. We are also responsible to respond to requests, concerns or suggestions from parishioners, regarding certain street furniture items.

This year, an On-Street Parking Working Group was set up to identify issues of defective signs and lines that could hinder police in unlawful parking and driving. On completion, defects were prioritised by all invited stakeholder parties, which comprised of the City of Ely Council, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire County Council and East Cambridgeshire District Council.

The 'On-Street Parking Working Group', achieved and activated a live working document between Cambridgeshire County Council Highways and the City of Ely Council. The Working Group has now completed its audit and the progress of the work identified is now monitored by the Street Furniture Committee.

Since the On-Street Parking Priority List was implemented, fourteen street signs and line defects have been completed with a further seven on order. There are a further twenty that either need applications for consultations to be carried out or have not been put on order yet from Cambridgeshire County Council.

During the year a second dog bin provision for Stuntney was requested and installed. A replacement dog bin was erected at Upherds Lane, as the original had gone missing.

The Memorial Bench Scheme, which allows members of the public or businesses to sponsor a commemorative bench within the parish, is still in operation. There have not been as many requests for the scheme this year.

A new notice board request was received by Prickwillow Village Council, which was funded from Section 106 monies. This has now been supplied and installed.

The bus shelter request adjacent to Lancaster Way Business Park had taken longer than anticipated. Unforeseen problems with the supplying company have now been resolved and the bus shelter has been erected.

The request for two bus shelters on King's Avenue had previously been considered and agreed that the City of Ely Council would not consider purchasing bus shelters in this area, until the future of the City Centre bus service was certain. However the Street Furniture Committee has been in contact with the developer to request that they consider installing these bus shelters.

A bus shelter seat request on Station Road was considered by the Committee, but agreed that a seat would not be purchased at this time, due to the potential development of this area, but would be considered in the future should the area be re-developed.

Although this is generally a Highways responsibility, on their land there have been requests made to the Street Furniture Committee to plant two trees, one in the location of Lynn Road and one in the lay-by adjacent to the golf course. With the Localism Act in mind, the City of Ely Street Furniture Committee is in the process of producing a Tree Policy, before any present or future requests can proceed.

One of Street Furniture's aims this year was to install Welcome to Ely signs on the Railway Bridge at Fisherman's car park and the Highway Bridge by the Railway Station. Progress although slow is still proceeding with relevant authorities, organizations and businesses. Also one of the Committee's aims was to install solar lights by the Riverside. This has now been discussed via the Riverside Improvement Plan and brought forward through working in partnership with ECDC. It was agreed that these solar lights would be funded from the City of Ely Council's, Section 106 open space monies.

As Chairman, I cordially thank the members and non members of the Street Furniture Committee that given their support and input during the year. I would also like to thank the office staff for their continued support and help and also the Council's Cemetery maintenance team for all their assistance.

Cllr Alison Arnold
Chairman

ELY IN BLOOM COMMITTEE REPORT 2013 – 2014

Ely in Bloom Committee comprises of City of Ely Councillors and volunteers from the local community, funded by the City of Ely Council and an annual grant from East Cambs District Council. The Committee meets regularly to discuss and arrange the planting of floral displays in Ely.

Summer Planting 2013/14

The hanging baskets and troughs were planted in flame colours. The large tower planter was moved from the Cathedral Centre to a new position on the Market Place and the tiers reduced to three. This replaced a tub, which was put behind the railings at the Court House. Simply Gardening was awarded the contract to plant up the hanging baskets, tower planters, welcome to Ely signs and barrier baskets.

Only two baskets were allowed on each lamppost. Brackets were therefore removed to comply with this and these were utilised in new areas. Thanks to the Cemetery Team for moving and re-fixing the brackets.

New hanging baskets were fixed to lampposts along and in front of the Palace Green and the waterfront extending to The Boathouse Restaurant. The large planter in the High Street was planted in the Logo colours of the Isle of Ely Festival and the Market Place tub planted to celebrate 100yrs of the Ely Dramatic Society, i.e. in white and blue.

Red Salvias were planted in the City of Ely Council trough at the War Memorial, in memory of those who lost their lives in wartime.

Sponsorship and celebration notices were made up to notify the public of the sponsor for the relevant flowerbed, along with any relevant celebration details.

Pupils from the Lantern School helped to clear the summer planting from the flowerbeds, ready for the winter planting.

Ely in Bloom Competition

A new category – (replaced Resident's basket/window box/container), was introduced this year - "Residents best use of a front garden." The other categories remained the same. A reception for the winners, held at Ely Methodist Church Hall was well attended.

Winter Planting 2013/14

Ely in Bloom provided bulbs for the residents of Columbine Road, to plant up an area along the verge. The wooden wheel barrow was removed from the Broad Street corner garden because it needed a lot of repair. The Helping Hands team will be replacing it with a trough. The wooden tub at the Court house was in a bad state of repair so it has been removed and replaced with eleven individual pots. Some bulbs were kindly donated by a local resident and were used in various flower beds in the city centre.

Future hanging basket contract

Tender documents and the Council's terms and conditions for a three year hanging baskets programme were sent out with Simply Gardening being awarded the contract. This will be introduced with effect from 2014.

On behalf of the Ely in Bloom Committee members

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS COMMITTEE 2013-2014

The Christmas Lights Committee consists of City of Ely councillors and co-opted members from the community. The committee meets on a regular basis, in order to discuss the lighting and switch on event for the coming Christmas.

2013 again brought its own challenges, as unfortunately the structural testing of the lampposts came too late for this year's display. However, due to the excellent planning of Mr Mike Chinery-Colyer and his volunteer 'Lighting Brigade', this problem was overcome and the City again had a fantastic display of lights. It is hoped features will be erected on lampposts in 2014, as funding has been obtained to install 28 sockets.

The Switch On evening is also arranged by volunteers and led by Mr Ian Newstead, who continues to arrange excellent entertainment for the many thousands of people, which attend the event each year. This event is supported by the Council and local businesses, which provide sponsorship.

Without the hard work of the Council staff, volunteers and committee members, the Christmas lights in Ely would not be possible.

Christmas Light Committee

ELY YOUTH FORUM ANNUAL REPORT

The objectives of the Ely Youth Forum are:-

1. To create a forum within which a healthy debate can occur on social and community issues across Ely and surrounding areas which affect youth seeking opinions and views.
2. To identify and develop ideas/projects that will benefit youth and to reward those who contribute to society as a whole.
3. To enhance public perception of youth as useful members of our society.
4. To provide and maintain appropriate communication vehicles, that promotes youth organisations and opportunities for individuals.

The Forum is a Committee of the City of Ely Council, consisting of five councillors with administrative support. Representatives of youth organisations, other organisations with a youth commitment and businesses who have a social community objective are invited to join.

Apart from the administrative costs which the City Council provides there is no specific funding. However, the Forum has the right to raise funds for projects through sponsorship, grants or fund raising activities which will enable the objectives above to be achieved.

In the last year the Forum has provided a link via the website of the City Council to youth activities within the City. In late Spring 2013 an open event was held in the Market Place, which allowed five organisations to demonstrate what they undertake and make available to youth. This was pertinent to what might be available in the long summer holidays. There was an intention to hold a similar event in September to again advertise what is available in the winter, but probably because of the timing, lack of interest meant the event was cancelled.

On a Thursday evening, thanks to the Cathedral, a drop-in centre is open to youths in the Cathedral Centre. Due to lack of funding, Friday nights were closed and some members of the Forum have been exploring how to increase this availability. Most of the well known youth organisations offer well structured and disciplined activities, but those who prefer less rigid facilities, simply want a location where they can meet and share over coffee etc. The Forum continues to explore how to achieve this ideal.

Cllr John Yates
Chairman – City of Ely Youth Forum

CITY CENTRE FORUM REPORT 2013-2014

The City Centre Forum was set up and is chaired by the City of Ely Council to provide an advisory Forum inclusive of all groups and sectors, with an interest in the effective management of Ely City Centre. It enables research and discussion on Town Centre management issues, shares best practice, and co-ordinates, supports and develops initiatives to reinforce and strengthen the Ely City Centre. Some of the key objectives identified were:

- To initiate local actions and activities designed to support and strengthen Ely City Centre;
- Act as a central contact and liaison point with the East Cambridgeshire Council's business and town centre development teams and other stakeholders to support agreed initiatives that will promote and reinforce Ely City Centre as a business centre and visitor destination;
- To identify an action/business plan to address issues and develop Ely as a business centre, retail and visitor destination, and community service centre.

Membership of the Forum comprises members and representatives from the City of Ely Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Ely Perspective, the Ely Museum, Ely Cathedral, The Ely Traders Association, the Ely independent retailers and multiples, the Ely Chamber of Commerce, the Ely Society and the Police.

The initial phase of the Forum was to create a real partnership and collaborative approach to setting priorities for the future in the short and medium term, and this has been achieved.

A working party was formed from the main Forum to take the ideas, plans and implementation forward. An example of this was the collaboration between the Ely Cathedral, COEC, ECDC, Perspective, Museum and the City Centre retailers during the Cathedral's Food and Craft Fair. This resulted in all stakeholders 'buying in' to the activity, through vouchers and activities, which encouraged visitors to the Cathedral to also visit and participate in the Town Centre offer.

In order to identify priorities for the short term Action Plan, a joint Seminar was run in February which attracted 60 plus participants. The keynote speaker was English Heritage, who shared case studies of other Heritage and Market towns, who had successfully identified strategies for sustaining their City Centres. Delegates then discussed and identified their views on what actions were required for Ely, based on the themes of 'Promotions and Communication' and the 'Town Centre Environment', as follows:

Promotions and Communication

- Develop new events and better link opportunities within existing events for town centre retailers to share the benefits;
- Develop and support a new independent shops brand for Ely;
- Develop a welcome pack for new and existing retailers;
- Support for traders to develop an online presence;
- Bring together the town centre groups into one;

Town Centre Environment

- Improve city centre signage for attractions, streets and traders;
- Improve linkages from Market Place, Forehill and the Riverside;
- Create a new coach drop off point in City Centre;
- Improve the appearance of the Market Place;
- Update shop exteriors;
- Gaps in ideas/projects

The findings have now been collated and the short term priorities are being put into a draft, costed and timed, Action Plan which will be circulated for consultation and then actioned by the appropriate organisations.

At the end of the first year of the Forum, we are delighted with the collaboration which has taken place so far and the plans being worked on which undoubtedly fulfil our original objectives.

One issue emerging from our experiences so far is the need to harness many more volunteers, who will lead and support planned projects. A systematic approach to gaining these will be a focus for next year.

Cllr Lis Every
Chair
City Centre Forum
April 2014

CCTV PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP REPORT 2013-2014

The CCTV Partnership has now been up and running very effectively for over 3 years, having recruited and trained a number of volunteers and PCSOs. The process is managed by a paid Co-ordinator working 20 hours per week, who oversees the operation of the system, reviewing procedures and practices, marketing and recruitment.

However, in the spirit of Localism, the Partnership has been re-shaped as the East Cambridgeshire District Council relinquishes ownership of their cameras to the City of Ely Council. We are, therefore, now looking at a smaller, but strong Partnership between the City Council, Soham Town Council and the local police. The Partnership will continue to be chaired by the City of Ely Council.

The transfer of the ownership also comes with the transfer to a Wi-Fi system, funded by the original 3 partners which will be more economic, whilst still providing an excellent service. Following a procurement process, a service provider was appointed and the process started early this year.

The benefit of increased coverage for observation, due to an increased combination of volunteers and PCSOs, has resulted in very positive feedback from the members of the Partnership. The continuation of the excellent relationship between police and volunteers has consolidated the working practices.

Recruitment of volunteers has been very effective and a further 12 volunteers were recruited and trained during this year. This is very encouraging. An Open Day at the Police Station, early in the year raised awareness of the system and members of the general public expressed their support for the system.

Through regular monitoring and review, we strive constantly to improve our coverage, effectiveness and efficiency working together with our partners.

The partners are very positive about the CCTV system and the benefits it provides for the local community, in terms of a deterrent and to the police for assistance in operational issues and are committed to extending the service as budgets and personnel allow.

As Chair, I would like to thank all Partnership members and volunteers for their support and tremendous hard work throughout the year and throughout the changeover process. We all look forward to further developing the project for our mutual benefit.

Cllr Elisabeth Every
Chair
April 2014

ELY-RIBE COMMITTEE

Report to Annual Parish Meeting - April 2014

The last year has been a very quiet one for the Association. The relationship with Ribe remains as active and established as before, but there were no formal contacts in the form of visits during the year and only a limited programme of events for our members.

The main concerns for the Association continue to be the future location of the Ely-Ribe tapestry and the drive to recruit further members.

The Association has worked closely with members of the City Council during the year, firstly to examine the potential for the tapestry to be relocated to the Courthouse building, which is now under the City Council's ownership. Whilst this would have made the tapestry more available for public viewing on weekdays, access for the disabled was felt to be a significant problem, and the costs of relocation were not inconsiderable. Were the appropriate arrangements for public access put in place, we have always considered the Maltings to be the preferred site, as it is in a part of the city that attracts visitors. We now understand that such arrangements may be put in place later in the year with the change of management at the Maltings, and we therefore look forward to working with the City Council to re-establish the tapestry as an attraction for visitors and local residents.

We shall also be widening the campaign to attract new members during the year, and a group will be visiting Ribe in June. Plans to invite a group from Ribe to the Eel Day weekend in 2015 are at an early stage.

G Hughes

Chairman, Ely-Ribe Association and Ely-Ribe Committee

16th April 2014

CITY OF ELY ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION REPORT FOR THE CITY OF ELY COUNCIL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2014

2014 looks as if it could be a challenging year on the allotments. Following the flooding earlier in the year the ground is still soggy in places in spite of the 17 day dry spell in early March, which did count as a drought, using the Met Office ruling of 15 days without precipitation. Asparagus and rhubarb seem to have suffered from having their roots in cold wet soil for so long but chickweed, stinging nettles, dandelion and thistles have emerged unscathed.

The current number of plot-holders on individual sites is as follows.

Site	2012	2013	2014
Canterbury Ave	9	9	8
Bridge fen	104	110	88
New Barns	43	50	49
Upherds Lane	45	46	45
Back Hill	2	2	2
Totals	203	217	190

The waiting list is currently 14 we are in the process of filling the odd vacancies on other sites.

Since the last Annual Parish Meeting there have been some changes at Bridge Fen. Following discussions with the planners on possible changes needed on the site, because of the bypass and a cycle/pedestrian pathway between Stuntney and Ely, a decision was taken to move tenants from the front of the site onto vacant plots before crops were planted, rather than leave them until the work actually started. Before this was accomplished, we were advised that a sewer was also going to be laid across the site, so more people had to be moved. The plotholders were naturally disappointed about being moved, but soon settled happily in their new plots. The committee were grateful to the other plotholders who rallied around to help. A knock-on effect of this is that so far this year only three new plotholders have gone onto Bridge Fen.

The winner of the coveted AJ Fenn Cup for best allotment was Mrs Vala Carter, for the second time. Sadly several of the old guard have been struggling with health problems this year and feel that they may not be carrying on after this season. One can only admire these men who still turn up every day, whatever the weather, and maintain weed-free plots in spite of being in their 80s

Thanks to increased vigilance and advice from the Police and the Neighbourhood Panel thefts from Bridge Fen have been minimal and golf balls and footballs are no longer being thrown onto New Barns.

On behalf of the allotment holders I would like to thank the City Council for their support through the year and particularly Cllr Nigel Clarke for his work on the committee.

CITY OF ELY ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

CITY OF ELY COUNCIL

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR 2013/2014

Due to the insufficient time between the year end on the 31st March 2014 and the publication of this report for the Annual Parish Meeting on the 28th April, it is not possible to produce the year end accounts summary. Therefore, information is provided in the form of pie charts, which show the income and expenditure of this Council.

A detailed summary will be available shortly from the Clerk.

	2013/2014	2014/2015
	£	£
Gross Expenditure	424,581	401,684
Income	104,090	95,264
Net Expenditure	320,491	306,420
ECDC's parish contribution	(24,874)	18,655
Amount of Precept	295,617	306,420



